



Australian Government
Australian Skills Quality Authority

ASQA

ASQA Corporate Plan 2023-24

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Skills Quality Authority acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.

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ISSN 2201-2303 (Print) 2202-6789 (Online)

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Chief Executive Officer's message

As the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Accountable Authority of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), I am pleased to present ASQA's Corporate Plan 2023-24.

ASQA's Corporate Plan 2023–24 is guided by the expectations of the Australian Government and follows advice on the performance of our functions from the National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Regulator Advisory Council. As our primary planning document, the Corporate Plan outlines our purpose and sets a refreshed direction for how we will collaborate to build our own and the VET sector's capability over the next 4 years (2023-24 to 2026-27), to ensure quality vocational education and training so students, industry, governments, and the community have confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers.

As the national regulator, our role is central to assuring consistent, high-quality VET, through effective and vigilant regulation, supporting the development of the sector's capability and capacity and building trust in the Australian VET sector. We again recommit to meeting the Standards for VET Regulators 2015, to apply best practice approaches to regulation while providing accountability and transparency of our activities.

Our forward program of work and Regulatory Risk Priorities continue to reflect the complex changes experienced across our operating environments, and changes impacting the system and providers over the past few years, most recently with the reopening of Australia's international education market and shifts in financial and technological settings.

Our long-term journey to continuously improve and assure government and the community of our approach is enabled through building confidence in our regulatory settings and in the system we regulate. Through strong working relationships with our key stakeholders, we continue to implement best practice regulation in the year ahead, adopting a whole-of-system view to ensure we manage risks to quality VET at both a system and provider level, while improving our performance, capability and culture to maximise proficiency.

Effective regulation relies on stakeholders having confidence in the regulator. Our commitment to continuous improvement through the implementation of a new Service Charter, including improved service standards, as well as ongoing implementation of an agency-wide approach to enhance our data and intelligence capability, will inform and prioritise our regulatory activities and resources. The refinement of our Regulatory Risk Framework and Regulatory Operating Model will also ensure proportionate and targeted regulation, as well as improvements to reporting outcomes and insights shared with the sector.

Our people and their resilience to change are essential elements of ASQA's continuous improvement journey. Against a significantly evolving resource landscape, we are committed to enabling a work environment that provides a tangible value proposition for our workforce. Through the release of ASQA's Workforce Plan 2023-25 and in alignment with the Australian Public Service (APS) Workforce Strategy, we are focused on demonstrating improved outcomes and value for all stakeholders through the retention of skilled, capable people essential to delivering our functions. Our Reconciliation Action Plan will aid in developing mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to address inequities existing in education, employment and economic prosperity.

As an agency sharing responsibility for the VET sector, we will continue to provide our regulatory expertise for consideration in policy decisions made by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and Department of Education (DoE) regarding the regulatory framework.

I thank our sector and government partners for their continued support. I also acknowledge the significant ongoing efforts of ASQA staff and thank them for their dedication, professionalism and unwavering dedication to continuous improvement.

Using this plan as our strategic foundation, we will deliver on its important purpose and promote confidence and trust in Australia's VET system as one that delivers quality training outcomes for all.

Statement of preparation

I, Saxon Rice, as the accountable authority of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), present our Corporate Plan 2023–24, which covers the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2027, as required under section 35(1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

This plan is prepared in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (PGPA Rule). This plan also meets the corporate plan requirements of sections 218(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (NVR Act).



Saxon Rice
Chief Executive Officer

About ASQA

Our purpose and role

We are the national regulator for Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

Our purpose is to ensure quality VET so that students, industry, governments, and the community can have confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers.

We regulate:

- providers that deliver VET qualifications and courses to students in Australia or offer Australian qualifications internationally
- providers that deliver VET courses to overseas students –approved on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to teach overseas students on student visas in Australia
- certain providers that deliver English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) – approved on the CRICOS.

We accredit VET courses to make sure nationally approved standards are met, based on established industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need.

We support confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers by:

- ensuring our monitoring, compliance, enforcement, and education activities make full use of intelligence and data so that the community can be confident that our activities are based on analysis of risk
- maintaining essential safeguards by responding adeptly to provider non-compliance and taking effective action applying a range of compliance and enforcement activities proportionate to the level of harm
- using education as a key regulatory tool and providing feedback which enables regulated entities to take responsibility for meeting their obligations, supports providers capability to address risks and to monitor, evaluate and continuously improve VET outcomes.

Our legislative framework

We operate within a framework of broader VET legislation, including the requirements for training packages that define the skills and knowledge learners need to perform jobs.

Our legislative framework includes:

- legislation establishing ASQA as the national VET regulator
- the VET Quality Framework of standards and requirements of providers
- Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021
- Legislation relating to Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS).

A full list of our governing legislation is provided at Appendix B.



Our strategic objectives

We share responsibility for assuring consistent, high-quality VET and recognise the importance our regulation plays in building student, community and industry trust in Australian VET, and ensuring students receive the skills and training necessary for secure work and career opportunities.

Our 5 strategic objectives shape our behaviour, underpin our decision making and actions and ensure we are focused at all times on effective regulation of the VET sector:

1. Our regulatory approach promotes a culture of self-assurance and continuous improvement.
2. Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate.
3. Our regulatory approach is transparent and accountable.
4. We engage, collaborate and partner with stakeholders to improve regulatory outcomes.
5. Our people and operations are supported and capable to deliver this plan and continuously improve.

We assess our performance against each of these objectives, as outlined in the *Key activities and performance measurement section*.

Our values

We are committed to continuously improving our regulatory approach and building trust in our regulatory capability. Our organisational values reflect this commitment. They underpin our mindset and behaviour – supporting us to achieve our purpose and reflecting our role as the National VET Regulator.

Our values describe who we are, guide how we conduct ourselves, inform how we work with our stakeholders to enact our regulatory authority and work in tandem with other guiding documents, such as our Regulatory Risk Framework and regulatory principles, policies, and practice guides, to ensure our stakeholders understand what they can expect when interacting with us.

Our values reflect and build on the APS Values and Code of Conduct – helping create a positive culture in which we can perform efficiently and effectively, providing a foundation for best practice and supporting us to ensure we are able to serve the students, industry, and communities of the future.





Our governance and structure

Our corporate governance arrangements play a crucial role in ensuring that the Australian Government's priorities are delivered efficiently and effectively. We have recently reviewed our governance structure and practices to ensure our Accountable Authority is effectively supported to make informed decisions and to manage risks and resources to ensure we meet our purpose. We will continue to refine these arrangements over the life of this plan to ensure they are optimal to meet changes in organisational requirements and the operating environment.

Governance

We are led by a CEO who reports directly to the Minister for Skills and Training. Our CEO is supported by a ministerially appointed Advisory Council, a legislated Audit and Risk Committee and 3 internal committees.

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (NVETR) Advisory Council

The NVETR Advisory Council is established under s. 174 of the NVR Act, to advise the CEO on our functions. The Council may also advise the Minister in relation to these functions on request.

Audit and Risk Committee

The CEO established an Audit and Risk Committee in compliance with s. 45 of the PGPA Act and s. 17 of the PGPA Rule, to provide independent advice on the agency's accountability and control framework, including independently verifying and safeguarding the integrity of the agency's financial and performance reporting.

Internal committees

The Executive Committee is a strategically focused committee that supports the CEO to lead and govern to ensure we fulfil our purpose, deliver on our objectives, foster a positive culture and meet our legal, financial, resourcing and regulatory obligations.

The Resources Committee is an operations focused committee that advises on all matters relevant to the effective and efficient operations of the agency.

The Regulatory Committee is an operations focused committee that advises the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) and Regulatory Executive Directors on policy, change and continuous improvement measures.

Structure

We are comprised of 4 groups:

- Market Entry, Skills and Accreditation - responsible for our education and assurance of entry to market applications and accredited course training products.
- Policy and Partnerships - oversees our regulatory policy, systemic review and evaluation, data, risk analytics and reporting, regulatory policy and engagement and internal review and appeals.
- Market Performance and Engagement - oversees operation of our regulatory tools and functions, including education services, performance monitoring activities, compliance management and enforcement action.
- Corporate and Enabling - leads our People and Capability, Finance, Property and Procurement, General Counsel, Digital Transformation and Information Technology functions.



Our operating environment

Impact of COVID-19

The VET sector was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, we worked with stakeholders to ensure pragmatic approaches while maintaining essential safeguards. We implemented a number of support measures, including regulatory flexibility and providing a 'hibernation' mechanism for providers to temporarily suspend all or part of their operations.

As we move out of the pandemic, we acknowledge residual impacts and challenges, for us and the sector, as we:

- return to full cost recovery following a period of fee waivers
- require a return to compliance for ESOS providers following an end to flexible regulatory arrangements for ESOS course delivery
- manage a high number of applications around scope and market entry
- experience a high number of student enquiries and
- remain alert to concerns around the financial sustainability of the sector.

Current and emerging priorities

We expect providers to comply with their obligations and to have mechanisms in place to ensure that they are meeting and continuously improving outcomes under the Standards¹ at all times. Students, industry, the community and governments expect this also. It is a core part of a provider's business practice and is central to maintaining and improving quality VET.

The actions providers themselves take to monitor, evaluate, and continuously improve the delivery of VET is critical to improving the quality and capacity of the sector to meet the Government's objectives for a high performing VET sector.

Building on our pandemic learnings, we will continue to develop and deploy flexible and innovative responses to emerging challenges, to ensure we remain an effective and vigilant regulator. A key driver is supporting Government's focus on ensuring the VET system is responding to the skills and labour needs of the Australian economy, now and into the future. Ensuring students receive the skills and training necessary for secure work and career opportunities is critical for a prosperous society and securing Australia's future economic growth.

On an international level, we are seeing increases in students returning onshore and are consequently focusing with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) on providers' return to compliance. We remain alert to actual and potential egregious behaviour by a small number of providers that has seen us contribute to Operation Inglenook – a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency taskforce. This has resulted in an increase in our investigatory and surveillance activity, and we continue to make full use of our regulatory powers to take action to detect risks relating to student wellbeing, inadequate or non-compliant training outcomes, and poor provider performance. We will also continue to proactively monitor the sector to identify and address low-quality training and practices, particularly in relation to any non-genuine providers, which may place students at risk.

¹ The VET Quality Framework, the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (*Standards for RTOs 2015*), the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021*, or the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (National Code 2018) (collectively referred to throughout as 'the Standards').

In line with the Australian Government's announcement in October 2023, to invest in ASQA's compliance, investigative and enforcement capabilities to strengthen our response to integrity issues in the VET sector, ASQA will also:

- Create a dedicated Integrity Unit, alongside an uplift in digital and data systems, to further support our capability to identify and respond proactively to risks. This will provide greater support for our inter-agency intelligence and compliance work, preventing and disrupting illegal behaviour and the exploitation of vulnerable students; and
- Establish a VET tip-off line to provide a safe and confidential avenue for current and former students, staff and other potential whistleblowers to report, anonymously if they wish, alleged illegal and serious non-compliance activity.

We value our role in the VET system and support shared responsibility for sector success with policy agencies, Jobs and Skills Australia, Jobs and Skills Councils, and other key stakeholders, including the ongoing work to harmonise our regulatory approach with TEQSA to support and enable dual sector providers.

We recognise the pace, scale and complexity of future reform and the important role we play in helping shape the regulatory framework. In doing so, we are contributing to the sector improvements which the Australian Government and the community expect. We are responsive to the Government priorities and will ensure that the focus of our regulation supports the Government's priorities to:

- Safeguard student welfare and the quality of VET
- Foster a world-class VET sector through regulatory action
- Collaborate with other agencies to enhance the quality of VET and support students.

In 2023–24 we will enable the sector to build its capacity for managing risks to quality, continuous improvement, and excellence in training outcomes. This includes working with DEWR to plan implementation of revised Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in a way that supports provider self-assurance practices. This change will be further supported by continued enhancements to the way we engage with the sector on risk, including using education as a key regulatory tool.

Regulatory Risk Priorities

We use a risk-based approach to determine the most significant risks to ensuring quality VET and the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers. This approach recognises that we cannot mitigate every risk, so we use a rigorous process to determine our regulatory priorities. This means we focus our activities on the areas of greatest risk to students and the sector.

Underpinning this process has been meeting with our industry and government stakeholders to listen to risk insights. We are committed to working with our stakeholders to achieve positive regulatory outcomes that enhance the quality of education and student experience.

As outlined above, the environmental settings for the VET sector are continuing to change as the economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, international markets open up and ongoing reform aims to address skills shortages and build skills for the future.

Our environmental scan uses data and information from a range of sources to understand the greatest risks to the VET and ELICOS sectors.

The current scan identified the most significant risks being in eight key areas:

- Student Work Placement
- Academic Integrity
- Online Delivery
- Shortened Course Duration
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Workforce Capability
- Governance through change
- International student delivery.



These key areas are where we will predominately focus our attention and we will continue to take a proactive approach to monitoring market settings and provider behaviour, including through:

- targeted assessment, monitoring and enforcement using a range of monitoring activities of providers such as those delivering in areas where there is an assessed level of risk
- strategic engagement with stakeholders and providers and feedback to identify environmental risks
- ongoing scanning of the environment using regulatory data, intelligence and insights from our partners to enable early detection of and proportionate responses to identified risks.

These activities support our risk identification and help ensure our regulatory approach and strategies are fit-for-purpose, responsive and proportionate, and effectively manage risks in the evolving environment.

Capability

Our people, workplace engagement, organisational structure and information and communication technology capabilities are vital to us undertaking our key activities and achieving our purpose.

People

We recognise our success is dependent on our people and are focused on attracting, retaining, and developing a highly skilled and engaged workforce, supported by strong leadership, within a values-driven organisational culture.

Our workforce priorities and strategies are aligned with the APS Workforce Strategy 2025. In building our workforce of the future we are committed to three key action areas:

1. Attract, build, and retain skills, expertise, and talent
2. Embrace data, technology, and flexible and responsive workforce models
3. Strengthen integrity and purposeful leadership.

Our geographically dispersed workforce comprises around 200 staff. We are fostering a contemporary, high performing, and inclusive culture and workforce that:

- exemplifies our organisational and APS values
- builds competencies to manage change as we respond to our operating environment
- identifies opportunities presented by change and enables us to play a pivotal role in likely sector reform
- invests in regulatory skill sets to continue to ensure quality VET outcomes
- is clear about the outcomes to be achieved and is supported to succeed including through a range of opportunities for formal and informal professional development
- is supported to deliver through effective planning, reporting, clarity and communication
- is recognised for their contributions
- focuses on productivity through adopting modern, flexible work practices
- embraces and celebrates diversity and inclusion, and actively promotes and supports staff health (including mental health) and wellbeing.

Our Workforce Plan 2023-25 and Capability Framework bring together a range of programs and initiatives which support and strengthen our workforce and enable our people to bring their best to work, ultimately making us more effective in achieving our strategic objectives.

Diversity and inclusion

We value the diverse experiences and contributions our colleagues bring to the workplace. Acknowledging and celebrating our diverse abilities and backgrounds contributes to a productive and high-performing work culture. It also improves our regulatory practice as it brings different perspectives to our decisions and approaches.

We engage with a diverse range of stakeholders and are striving to ensure our workforce reflects this diversity, and is supported, skilled and knowledgeable in their dealings with these stakeholders.

We have made significant progress in the implementation of our Diversity Strategy, which launched in November 2019, and are developing a new strategy in consultation with staff. Our diversity strategies and initiatives focus on a breadth of issues and ensure we:

- align with APS diversity targets and strategies, including the APS Employment Strategy 2020–2025
- take targeted actions to ensure that no discrimination or disadvantage occurs with respect to any ASQA employee on the basis of their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation
- take positive steps to eliminate workplace sex discrimination and harassment in all forms
- promote awareness and understanding of positive mental health practices, minimising or eliminating risks to mental health, and supporting employees who are experiencing mental health concerns through supporting psychologically safe work practices
- acknowledge and highlight diversity and inclusion occasions by raising awareness and education.

We are committed through our diversity initiatives to do what is possible in our role as the National VET regulator to address entrenched disadvantage.

Reconciliation Action Plan

We value and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures, languages, identities and connection to Country. Our vision for reconciliation is for all Australians to work together to address injustice and provide equality of opportunity, and to support the development of a VET sector that embraces the knowledge, leadership and strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We seek to achieve this by deepening our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and by broadening our engagement with other Government departments, the private sector, the VET sector, and the community we represent.

In 2023 we launched our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which build on our first RAP launched in November 2020. This plan will help us develop mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to address inequities, particularly in the areas of education, employment and economic prosperity.

We seek to achieve positive education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by ensuring high-quality VET is available and accessible for all.



Digital transformation and technology

Technology underpins and enables our key activities, including management of systems supporting regulatory activity and securing our information and assets. We are investing in our digital capabilities to enable best-practice regulation and the ability to deliver customer-centred products efficiently and effectively in a cost recovery setting.

Our digital transformation journey commenced in 2021–22, with a focus on:

- aligning with best practice and the existing whole-of-government approach to digital transformation, including sourcing external expertise from the Digital Transformation Agency (including as a member of the Transformation Partnership group with the DEWR) to inform the development of our Digital Transformation Program
- aligning to maximise efficiency and minimise cost within a cost recovery setting
- aligning to our Regulatory Operating Model to ensure our regulation is supported by capable technology
- establishing agile ways of working to increase our ability to adapt and respond to technological change quicker and more efficiently
- partnering with other APS agencies and the private sector to ensure we have the right capabilities in place to deliver on our digital transformation commitments during 2023–24 and beyond
- understanding the journey and experiences our staff and provider network have when interacting with us, through a comprehensive Customer Experience Research activity.

In 2023–24, we will continue to invest in our digital transformation by:

- putting people at the centre by ensuring the products we build meet the needs of our staff, providers, and students, and improve our service delivery capabilities
- enhancing our data capture, storage, and analytical capabilities to give us greater visibility of provider information and allow us to implement data-driven and risk-based regulatory approaches based on a contemporary understanding of the performance of the sector and individual providers
- ensuring our enterprise architecture enables contemporary, cost effective and seamless solutions for providers and other users, delivers more streamlined regulatory interactions between us and providers and supports efficient and effective regulatory outcomes.

Cost recovery

The Australian Government requires all cost recovery agencies to publish a Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) which outlines how they calculate and implement charges for specific regulatory activities.

We began operating as a full cost recovery agency on 1 July 2022. This involved changes to our cost recovery arrangements, including fees and charges. Our 2022–23 CRIS explains how these fees and charges, together with the strategic use of our cost recovery model, align with our four-year program of planned improvements to our operations as outlined in this Corporate Plan.

Full cost recovery does not equate to 100% of costs being recovered from providers and course owners. A thriving VET sector, where regulatory risks to quality VET are managed by us benefits all Australians and, in recognition of this, the costs of some aspects of our functions (including expanding our educative role to ensure training providers are aware of and supported to understand regulatory requirements) are not recoverable.

Enhancing our transparency and accountability to stakeholders for ASQA's planned program of regulatory work, the impact of that work, and the cost of undertaking it, will contribute strongly to building trust and confidence in the national regulator.

In 2023–24 and beyond, we will continue to engage with stakeholders to:

- enhance the cost consciousness of both ASQA and providers and improve the efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable conduct of our regulatory activity
- minimise costs to business and taxpayers while improving quality outcomes and maintaining safeguards. For example, considering the high-volume applications (such as change of scope applications) where more cost-efficient risk management and systems can be developed.

How we regulate

Regulatory best practice

As a Commonwealth regulator we are accountable to Government and committed to meeting the performance and reporting expectations outlined in the Resource Management Guide (RMG 128) for Regulator Performance. These expectations are underpinned by 3 principles of regulatory best practice:

1. Continuous improvement and building trust: regulators adopt a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving their performance, capability and culture to build trust and confidence in Australia's regulatory settings.
2. Risk-based and data-driven: regulators manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden, and leveraging data and digital technology to support those they regulate to comply and grow.
3. Collaboration and engagement: regulators are transparent and responsive communicators, implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way.

We apply these principles by:

- adopting a whole-of-sector perspective, to ensure consistent high-quality VET across Australia
- applying an appropriate mix of education, compliance and enforcement tools to support the sector to continuously improve, and to prevent, manage and act on key risks
- regularly reviewing and, where necessary, adjusting our priorities and practices to meet changing social, technological and commercial context
- being open and consistent in our engagement with stakeholders including industry, government and the broader community
- being responsive to Government's policy objectives for VET and reforms agreed by the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council.

We strive to continuously improve our performance, capability and culture, to build trust and confidence in our regulatory settings, and to ensure our regulation is as effective, efficient and transparent as possible.

Continuous improvement and building trust

Our Corporate Plan sets out our commitment to service and engagement with stakeholders to identify and implement continuous improvements to our regulatory operations including to improve the efficiency of our operations. We acknowledge this is critical to building trust in our regulatory setting and approach, which ultimately supports trust and confidence in the sector.

We continue to implement and embed, changes to our regulatory practices, governance and culture as outlined in the 2020 Rapid Review Report which found that changes were needed to improve our engagement with the sector, ensure a risk-based and proportionate regulatory approach and that there was a shared understanding of ASQA's role.

To build organisational capability and a positive risk culture, we have made improvements to our internal and external governance arrangements including through new legislated arrangements to clarify the agency's role, and internal mechanisms to drive, monitor and improve our accountability and risk management. We have also defined our values to support a learning culture committed to accountability and continuous improvement.

We have adapted our audit methodology to provide a better understanding of the performance of providers (including a focus on self-assurance and promoting consistency of audit outcomes) and implemented a compliance management function to ensure appropriate and proportionate regulatory action when non-compliance is identified and promote provider focus on systemic and sustained improvement in addressing non-compliance. We have also implemented changes to strengthen the role of education and engagement with VET providers as key regulatory tools.

In 2022, our NVETR Advisory Council was appointed, and we have worked closely with the Council since this time to draw on their expertise and advice in the performance of our functions.

We are required under the Standards for VET Regulators to develop and report against service standards that relate to how we perform our regulatory functions. Since 2021, in consultation with stakeholders, and with the advice of the NVETR Advisory Council, we undertook a review of our service standards and in 2023-24 we will be implementing and imbedding revised service standards. We are committed to monitoring and evaluating our performance and will strive to make improvements in our performance year on year.

Risk-based and data driven

We view risk as the potential for exposure to poor quality outcomes for VET stakeholders if an RTO does not comply with its regulatory obligations. A risk-based approach means that our regulatory approach and decisions about regulatory actions are informed by considering the likelihood of, and potential for, adverse consequence caused by this non-compliance.

Our Regulatory Risk Framework and Regulatory Operating Model outline our regulatory approach – communicating our management of sector and provider risk and describing how our regulatory functions are applied. We take a responsive, proportionate and risk-based approach that focuses on:

- treating the most significant risks to the integrity of qualifications issued by training providers and the achievement of quality VET outcomes
- analysing intelligence to gain insights into provider and sector behaviour and designing regulatory activities that make use of these insights and respond to specific regulatory risks
- engaging strategically with providers and stakeholders about risk. This includes sharing information to support a better understanding of risk and raise awareness of our risk priorities, and providing feedback to support providers to self-assure and continuously improve in these areas

- applying risk-based, proportionate and fit-for-purpose responses through foundational risk treatments including registration management (including at market entry) and approvals, course accreditation, routine sector monitoring, performance assessment, compliance management, enforcement, education and internal review of decisions
- using insights and outcomes from our regulatory operations to report on provider and sector performance, understand the impact and effectiveness of our regulatory activities, including having regard to the diversity of the sector we regulate, and continuously improving our regulatory design and approach.

We hold providers to account where we find they do not meet their regulatory obligations. Our response is proportionate – we consider a range of matters, including the actual or potential risk of harm to students, and the provider’s commitment or capability to deliver quality VET. We have a range of regulatory tools we can use, which aim to promote and compel compliance, and improve the quality of VET outcomes across the sector.

We continue to implement our enhanced data and analytics strategy and build improved understanding of the diversity and characteristics of the market to better target our services and interactions with regulated entities. We also continue to collaborate with our stakeholders to understand and address sector and individual provider risks in the context of changes in our shared operating environment.

In 2023-24 we will mature our risk-based approach to market entry and work with DEWR to ensure that the policy settings and regulatory framework applicable to market entry are addressing risks of non-genuine providers who do not demonstrate capability and commitment to deliver quality VET and educational outcomes.

We will focus on risks associated with some models of delivery to international students that can threaten VET integrity and we will take appropriate action to ensure compliance to protect genuine students, the sector and the integrity of the student visa system where we identify breaches or underlying systemic risk.

More broadly, we will foster confidence in our sector and help build a culture of excellence in VET by identifying providers who fail to meet their obligations and using all regulatory tools at our disposal to return these providers to compliance or exit them from the sector.



Collaboration and engagement

We are committed to collaborating and engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders to enhance the reputation of the VET sector and support and protect students.

We do this by:

- Working closely with DEWR and DoE, as partners with responsibility for the VET sector and international education at the Commonwealth level.
- Fostering strong working relationships with other key VET stakeholders that support our functions, including other VET regulators; state and territory officials and departments; other Commonwealth and industry agencies; Jobs and Skills Australia; Jobs and Skills Councils; and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research.
- Collaborating with other regulatory and enforcement agencies, including through data and information sharing regarding VET providers and their compliance with law.
- Establishing partnerships and strategic engagements that improve regulatory outcomes – collaborating to identify risks and designing regulatory approaches and strategies that are well-informed and take account of the current and emerging environment in which we are operating.
- Ensuring feedback loops that inform broader VET sector reforms and improve regulatory policy and regulatory outcomes, including . For example, providing ongoing input to the reforms to the VET Quality Framework and the review of the Standards for RTOs 2015 and
- Continuing to build a common understanding of our role and regulatory approach - what stakeholders can and cannot expect of us and areas of shared stakeholder responsibility — recognising that our regulatory operations intersect with other parts of the VET system with many influences on provider quality — and partnering with other entities to address risks, enhance quality outcomes and reduce regulatory burden for providers.
- Established partnerships that result in a national approach to the regulation of the VET sector and outcomes for VET, including with law enforcement agencies – continuously improving our partnership and engagement on matters relevant to our role as the national regulator of VET and building a common understanding and alignment of our role and regulatory approach to government expectations.




Key activities and performance measurement

Across all our activities and deploying the full suite of our regulatory tools as required, we will focus on continuous improvement and excellence in training outcomes, enabled by improved engagement with all stakeholders and expanded use of sector monitoring and education.

Our five strategic objectives align with the performance criteria in our Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) 2023-24. For each strategic objective, we have identified key activities, key performance indicators (KPIs), measures and targets to assess our performance. Our planned activities also incorporate ongoing implementation of recommendations outlined in the Rapid Review of ASQA's regulatory practices and processes.

As part of delivering best practice regulation for Australia's VET sector, we will enhance our performance framework, year-by-year, to improve the quality, relevance and timeliness of information about our performance, and the performance of the sector we regulate.



Strategic Objective 1:
Our regulatory approach promotes
a culture of self-assurance and
continuous improvement


Strategic Objective 1: Our regulatory approach promotes a culture of self-assurance and continuous improvement

PBS performance criteria: ASQA delivers improved provider self-assurance and continuous quality improvement

Key activities

- Collaborating with DEWR and stakeholders to enhance sector capacity for continuous quality improvement and prepare for implementation of revised standards for RTOs including development of self-assessment tools.
- Providing education and guidance to providers and market entrants to communicate our expectations and their obligations to comply and continuously improve quality outcomes.
- Aligning our data and intelligence to identify common areas of non-compliance with Standards and providing feedback and information on risks of non-compliance.
- Developing regulatory approaches and tools to promote self-assurance and continuous improvement and ensure these expectations are clear and well-understood in all our interactions with regulated entities.

KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
1.1 ASQA's regulatory tools and practices support providers to self-assure quality VET outcomes and continuously improve	1.1a) Percentage of providers that agree that our regulatory tools and practices support them to self-assure and continuously improve	2023-24	75%
		2024-25	77%
		2025-26	79%
		2026-27	80%
1.2 Our published insights about risks and the outcomes of our risk treatments support providers to self-assure their own operations	1.2a) Percentage of providers that agree that our published insights about risks and the outcomes of our risk treatments support providers to self-assure their own operations	2023-24	75%
		2024-25	77%
		2025-26	79%
		2026-27	80%



Strategic Objective 2:
Our regulatory approach is best
practice, integrated, risk-based
and proportionate

Strategic Objective 2: Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate

PBS performance criteria: ASQA's regulation is best practice, integrated, risk-based, data-driven, and proportionate

Key Activities:

- Analysing data, intelligence and information to identify and respond proportionately to risk.
- Collaborating with our stakeholders to understand and address sector and individual provider risks in the context of the operating environment.
- Applying a risk based proportionate approach to:
 - › registering VET training providers to provide national qualifications and registering providers to provide a course or courses to overseas students
 - › accrediting national courses to meet statutory requirements
 - › monitoring training provider compliance with the VET quality framework and applicable legislation, including the ESOS Act and National Code 2018
 - › carrying out performance assessment (audits) of training providers against applicable standards and obligations
 - › holding providers to account through compliance tools and enforcement of their obligations
 - › delivering education activities relating to the regulation of RTOs and to promote and encourage provider capacity to deliver quality VET.
- Collaborating with DEWR, DoE, State and Territory authorities, TEQSA, Department of Home Affairs, and other regulators on data, analytics and regulatory strategies to better understand the diversity and characteristics of providers, and behaviours, and target our regulation to address risk.
- Improving our reporting on outcomes from our risk-based regulatory activities and sharing the insights and feedback from these activities with the sector.
- Considering and learning from best practice regulation in other jurisdictions.

KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
2.1 Our regulation focuses on the greatest risk of harm to the integrity of training products and achievement of quality outcomes	2.1a) We draw on intelligence and data from a broad range of inputs to determine the most significant risks and publishes Regulatory Risk Priorities	2023–27	2 per year
	2.1b) We report on outcomes of our delivery of planned, integrated regulatory treatments and how they address our Regulatory Risk Priorities	2023–27	Annually
	2.1c) We implement and report on our Data Strategy and Roadmap 2021-24 to embed the use of data, analytics and insights throughout decision making	2023–24	Annually

Strategic Objective 2: Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
2.2 Our education and communication with the sector supports sustained compliance	2.2a) We publish information and guidance to providers, market entrants, course owners to understand and meet their regulatory obligations	2023–27	Aligned to our Regulatory Risk Priorities, or when risks, obligations, or expectations change
	2.2b) Percentage of providers that report our feedback is clear and supports an improved understanding of their performance	2023–24	75%
		2024–25	77%
		2025–26	79%
		2026–27	80%
	2.2c) Percentage of applicants that report our feedback is clear and supports an improved understanding of requirements NB: ‘applicants’ to include course accreditation applicants	2023–24	75%
		2024–25	77%
		2025–26	79%
		2026–27	80%
2.3 We manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards	2.3a) We demonstrate proportionality by reporting on the regulatory tools applied at market entry and in monitoring the compliance of providers in accordance with our Regulatory Risk Framework	2023–27	Annually
	2.3b) We demonstrate proportionality by reporting on the broad range of regulatory tools applied in responding to findings of non-compliance in accordance with our Regulatory Risk Framework	2023–27	Annually
2.4 We implement better practice improvements in how we exercise our regulatory functions	2.4a) Number of improved regulatory processes implemented in consultation with key stakeholders	2023–27	2 per year
	2.4b) We publish evidence of ASQA’s active participation in regulatory communities of practice	2023–27	Annually





Strategic Objective 3:
Our regulatory approach is
transparent and accountable

Strategic Objective 3: Our regulatory approach is transparent and accountable

PBS performance criteria:

- ASQA is transparent in the performance of our regulatory functions and responsibilities as a regulator, including compliance with the Standards for VET Regulators 2015
- ASQA publishes information about performance of the sector to support transparency and accountability

Key Activities:

- Collecting, analysing, interpreting and disseminating information about sector and provider performance.
- Publishing information about registered training organisations in accordance with legislation.
- Continuously improving the quality, relevance, and timeliness of the information we publish including about:
 - › our risk-based regulatory approach
 - › implementation of regulatory practice improvements
 - › our regulatory activity and performance.
- Publishing our policy to manage and respond to stakeholder feedback about our regulatory practices and using evidence from a range of sources, including feedback about ASQA, to review and improve our regulation.

KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
3.1 Stakeholders, can access information about our regulatory approach	3.1 a) We publish our Regulatory Risk Framework and Regulatory Operating Model	2023–27	Annually
3.2 Stakeholders, can access information about our regulatory activity and performance	3.2a) We report on our performance against our service standards	2023–27	Annually
	3.2b) We report on our performance against the Standards for VET Regulators 2015	2023–27	Annually
3.3 The Australian community can access information about our regulatory decisions	3.3a) We publish information about provider performance to enable students and employers to differentiate between providers	2023–27	Annually
3.4 The Australian community can access information about sector-wide performance	3.4a) We publish a summary of our findings regarding all providers' performance against the Standards for RTOs	2023–27	Annually
	3.4b) We analyse and report on trends in relation to complaints received about registered training providers	2023–27	Annually
3.5 We report on implementation of ASQA's regulatory reform	3.5a) We report on the number of Rapid Review Recommendations implemented	2023–27	Annually

Strategic Objective 4:
We engage, collaborate and partner
with stakeholders to improve
regulatory outcomes

Strategic Objective 4: We engage, collaborate and partner with stakeholders to improve regulatory outcomes

PBS performance criteria: ASQA's engagement and partnerships provide clarity of the role of the national regulator and improve regulatory impact

Key Activities:

- Continuing to work in partnership with policy agencies to deliver major reforms including planning to support implementation of revised standards for RTOs and implementing VET data streamlining projects.
- Building on work to continuously improve our partnership and stewardship on matters relevant to our role and regulatory approach, and areas of shared responsibility. In particular our engagement will focus on improving policy and regulatory outcomes in the following areas:
 - › strengthening our assurance of suitability at market entry and that applicants demonstrate the commitment and capability to delivery quality VET
 - › promoting quality and addressing risks that threaten to damage the reputation of the VET sector including international delivery of VET
 - › protecting students undertaking, or proposing to undertake, Australian VET domestically or internationally
 - › strengthening data analytics capability and insights
 - › enhancing feedback loops on risks and issues that inform broader VET reforms, the Australian Qualifications Framework, VET delivery
 - › supporting our commitment to diversity and inclusion and the reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians through our regulatory approach
 - › supporting national consistency in the regulation of the VET sector.

KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
4.1 Our partnerships and engagement inform and enhance our regulatory approach	4.1a) We constructively engage with peak bodies of the regulated community to inform and improve our regulatory approach and support timely communication with the sector	2023–27	Quarterly
	4.1b) We implement our protocols to engage and collaborate with government entities, other regulators, industry, students and the consumer protection network to support regulatory outcomes	2023–27	Annually
4.2 We are proactive in our engagement to ensure that the regulatory system for which we have operational responsibility remains fit-for-purpose over the long term	4.2a) ASQA reports its contribution to improvement of the regulatory settings and the broader VET framework	2023–27	Annually

Strategic Objective 5:
ASQA's people and operations are
supported and capable to deliver
this plan and continuously improve

Strategic objective 5: ASQA's people and operations are supported and capable to deliver this plan and continuously improve

PBS performance criteria: ASQA is efficient, effective, and continuously improves.

Key Activities

- Implementing our Workforce Plan and strategies aligned with our organisational values to support a highly skilled and engaged workforce, to fully achieve our objectives.
- Building organisational capability to deliver on priorities for the government and the community, and quickly respond to opportunities and challenges in our environment.
- Providing our workforce with the right tools including by progressively implementing digital enhancements to improve our regulatory capacity, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Our new Reconciliation Action Plan continues to embed diversity and inclusion strategies to build an inclusive workplace that promotes improved productivity, greater creativity and innovation, and reflects the Australian community.
- Strengthening the connection our staff have with this plan and giving everyone visibility of how they contribute so they can grow in their roles and thrive into the future.
- Working in partnership with DEWR to protect our organisation, and thereby providers and others in the VET ecosystem from cyberthreats and data breaches.
- Using our assurance and evaluation activities to understand how we are going and identify improvements in our operations (including systems and technology).

KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
5.1 We use a range of tools to understand and improve the efficiency of our operations and inform the alignment of our resources to regulatory priorities	5.1a) Our published Cost Recovery Implementation Statement demonstrates how regulatory activities generates costs and the achievement of a minimum efficient cost for those activities	2023-27	Annually
5.2 We share information about our assurance and quality control activities	5.2a) Key stakeholders receive information about our assurance activities and continuous improvement of processes and systems	2023-27	Annually
5.3 We share information about evaluation of our regulatory operations	5.3a) We publish iterative evaluation of our regulatory operations	2023-27	Annually
5.4 We progressively implement digital enhancements that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations	5.4a) We track and measure the benefits and efficiencies enabled by the Digital Transformation Project and report on these appropriately	2023-27	Annually

Organisational risk oversight and management

Effective, integrated management of risk continues to be critical to the achievement of our purpose. Effective risk management helps us to:

- guard against the possibility that by act, oversight or omission, our ability to achieve our purpose is compromised
- make sound evidence-based decisions in relation to our strategic objectives, management approaches and day-to-day operations
- build our capacity to innovate
- engender confidence in our stakeholders.

Our system of risk oversight, management and internal controls is aligned with s. 16 of the PGPA Act and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.

We will continue to strengthen our risk maturity, ensuring risk management is:

- integral to all our activities, functions and processes including how we innovate in key areas, how we engage and partner with our stakeholders, and, ultimately, how we regulate
- a key element of good governance and our best practice regulatory decision-making
- pivotal to our management practices at all levels, including accountability and transparency
- part of the day-to-day work of everyone in ASQA as we build individual capability to engage with risk.

We accept that, despite best efforts and robust risk management practices, things may still go wrong. A positive risk culture is inherent in our approach to regulation and key to our continuous improvement – we review the reasons for failure, and use our learnings to further strengthen our systems, processes and controls, reducing the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Types of risk defined

Strategic Risk	Strategic risks are risks that affect ASQA as a whole and on our ability to achieve our strategic objectives and operate effectively. ASQA's leadership team takes direct responsibility for managing strategic risks.
Operational Risk	Operational risks are those which could impact on a business area or on our ability to achieve operational deliverables. Operational risks are generally the responsibility of managers of ASQA's business units.

Summary of Strategic Risks

Strategic Risk	Controls summary
ASQA does not attract, support and retain an engaged, skilled and resilient workforce in order to deliver on our objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and selection policy including mobility, bulk recruitment, diversity targets, and transfers Learning and development, and capability uplift Diversity and culture measures, including flexible employment provisions
ASQA does not respond efficiently and effectively to changes in government priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networks and key relationships in place (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, central agencies, sector peak bodies, Minister's Office, States and Territories) Formalised engagement, standing arrangements, memoranda of understanding Planning and evaluation frameworks ensure clear vision and approach Budget and business planning processes Corporate Plan
ASQA does not meet its performance targets and compliance obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management system Compliance and Incident Management framework ASQA Performance framework supports monitoring and embeds performance culture Budgetary framework, financial performance management, and reporting Fraud Control framework System of governance
ASQA does not promote a cultural shift to selfassurance and continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council Implementation of Rapid Review recommendations Assurance workplans and business as usual practices include activities to identify continuous improvement ASQA values clearly identified Education as a key function in ASQA's regulatory approach
ASQA does not effectively address risks to quality and integrity of vocational education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established stakeholder liaison mechanisms Use of data and intelligence to identify risks and inform treatments National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council ASQA Performance framework Performance Development and Management framework Functional design supports the Regulatory Operating Model Regulatory Risk Framework and Regulatory Operating Model

Appendix A – List of requirements

This Corporate Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act; and
- subsection 16E(2) of the PGPA Rule 2014.

The table details the requirements met by ASQA's Corporate Plan and the page reference(s) for each requirement.

Requirements	Page(s)
Introduction	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of preparation • The reporting period for which the plan is prepared • The reporting periods covered by the plan 	
Purposes	6
Key activities	23
Operating context	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment • Cooperation • Capability • Regulatory Functions • Risk oversight and management, including key risks and their management 	11 21 14 19 36
Performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance measures • Targets for each performance measures (if reasonably practicable to set a target) 	22-35 22-35

Appendix B – Key legislation

Acts

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVR Act)

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)

Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges Act 1997 (ESOS Registration Charges Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Act 2012 (NVR Charges Act)

Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)

Instruments

ASQA Authorised Officer Requirements 2012 (s 89(2A) NVR Act)

Australian Skills Quality Authority Instrument Fixing Fees Amendment Declaration (No 1) 2018 (s 232 of the NVR Act)

Australian Skills Quality Authority Instrument fixing fees No 1 of 2013 (ss 232(1) and 232(5) of the NVR Act)

ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) Standards 2018 (s 176B(1) of the ESOS Act)

Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements 2021 (s 158 of the NVR Act)

Fit and Proper Person Requirements 2011 (s 186 of the NVR Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Determination 2013 (No 1) (ss 6B(1), 9(2), 12(2) and 13 of the NVR Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Data Provision Requirements) (s 187 of the NVR Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Regulations 2011 (s 235 NVR Act)

Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (s 185 of the NVR Act)

Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021 (s 188 of the NVR Act)

Standards for VET Regulators 2015 (s 189 of the NVR Act)

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (s 33(1) of the ESOS Act)



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